

Good Brother,

**I** DO acknowledge that I am bound to lay my self out in any thing that may conduce to your Assistance, for carrying on that Great Work, which lyes upon you of the cure of Souls. But when I reflect upon the cheerful concurrence I met with in those endeavours I have hitherto used for the promoting that Unanimity, which is the Life and Strength of your performance, and Cements and Embodies your whole proceeding to a lasting strength: I cannot, but with a most thankful Heart to God, rejoyce in that just disposition, with which, by his Grace, he has fill'd your honest Mind. That therefore I may never be wanting, and that this Repetition of what you were my Councillour in the last year, may the more quicken you to do your duty in those things, which you did then so readily consent and advise to: Take your own and my sense, so near as I can recollect it, concerning the Subject of our last conference.

### Upon Canon 54.

**T**He Title and Substance of this Canon is, *The Licenses of Preachers refusing Conformity, to be void.* And to compleat the expectation of the Church in matters of this nature: We must look to Canon 38. which ordains, *That obstinate Revolters after Subscription, are to be depos'd from the Ministry.* The reason of these severities proceeds from the absolute necessity of keeping up Discipline in the Church of God. For Nature, the Constitution of the World, experience in the subsistence and success of things, teach us, that the Maker of all things is a God of Order, and hates Confusion. Therefore is the Church of Christ likened to a Building, which consists in an orderly disposing of different Materials into one Structure. *I will Build my Church,* says our Saviour, Mat. 16. 18. *You also are Built together, &c.* Eph. 2. 2. St. Paul writing to the Schismatical Separatists of Corinth, *As a wise Master Builder, I have laid the Foundation,* 1 Cor. 3. 10. *You are Gods Building,* 1 Cor. 3. 9. *In whom all the Building fitly fram'd,* Eph. 2. 21. And so in many other places. It is also express'd as a Body, *See 1 Cor. 12.* how the Apostle adapts the Constitution and Frame of the natural Body to that of the Church, and concludes *vers. 27. You are the Body of Christ.* — *For the edifying the Body of Christ,* Eph. 4. 12, and *vers. 16. The whole Body fitly join'd together, &c. maketh increase of the Body.* From which the Body by Joynts and Bands, Col. 2. 19. *For his Bodys sake, which is the Church,* Col. 1. 24. There are many more expressions of this kind; but I mention these especially, to shew after what manner we are Embodied, and to what end. Sometimes it is called a Kingdom, which is a Body Politick under one Head. *The Gospel of the Kingdom,* Mat. 4. 23. *I appoint you a Kingdom,* Luke 22. 29. And so in divers other Portions of Scripture. But to let us understand how necessarily the utmost rigour of Discipline is to be observ'd in a Christi-

an, we are most truly represented to be in a state of War, continually encountering the Flesh, the World and the Devil, at the Peril of an everlasting Death. And therefore he says, *Put on the Armour of Light,* Rom. 13. 12. *Put on the whole Armour of God,* Eph. 6. 11. Now we know under what severe Penalties almost the least fault is forbid by Martial Law, and how strictly it is Executed, not from the roughness of the Profession, but the Nicety of the Case; where every little disorder, or disobedience to command, always gives advantage to a watchful Enemy, and many times endangers a total overthrow. We are therefore to consider what is expected from us, for the fitting our selves to this posture, that we may be able to stand in the day of tryal.

1. The first thing we are to do, is so well to dispose our selves, by an humble and peaceable Mind, that in the Church where it has pleas'd God to place us, *In what state soever, therewith to be content: To study to be quiet and mind our own business:* And to yield a hearty, willing and thorough Conformity to the Rules we are under. For if nothing be ordain'd contrary to the express Will of God: *Every Ordinance of Man is to be submitted to for the Lords sake,* 1 Pet. 2. 13. To this end, the two Acts of Uniformity ought to be strictly read, and observed by us. As also the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, Anno 1603. with the Rubricks to the several Offices in the Liturgy; taking great heed at the same time to our Doctrine, by having a special regard to the 39. Articles, as expounded in the Books of Homilies. That neither in word nor deed we may hurt, or offend the Church we serve in.

What less can we think our selves obliged to; when we consider in what manner St. Paul conjures the *Corinthians?* Ch. 1. 10. *Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions (or Schisms) among you: But that you be perfectly join'd together in the same mind, and in the same Judgment. And, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same thing,* Phil. 3. 16. *Let all things be done decently and in order,* 1 Cor. 14. 40. Surely after this we may safely conclude, that whosoever transgresses the Rule upon a less account, then obedience to the express Will of God, or *shall teach men so; he shall be call'd the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

We are not here to understand every breach of the Rule, to lye under this guilt, but such as are committed wilfully, or out of supine negligence. Neither need we think it a neglect of duty in those things, which by an Universal omission, the silence of our Superiours giving way to it, lye under a tacite consent of Abrogation, or Suspension at least. Nor are we to think it a small matter, the leaving these things undone; because it is of greater immediate duty to observe the weightier matters of the Law. I say immediate, inasmuch as the consequence in the omission of lesser matters, may occasionally and too frequently does prove more fatal to the peace of the Church, and Mens Consciences than the other.

2. In the next place, we are to consider our selves in the State of Church-Discipline, as Watchmen and Shepherds to guard and secure our Flocks. We must for this reason, not only see that we our selves, but be careful that others do not

offend those that in a special manner belong to us. We must drive away all erroneous Doctrines, and avoid disorderly Walkers. We must drive away the bold Wolves, the little Foxes, and all Beasts of Prey, as we will otherwise answer for the care committed unto us.

If any come upon us, or go out from among us, and discover the Savageness of their natures, by not being content to forsake and renounce Order themselves, but teach and encourage men so to do; these are Beasts of Prey. And it is one of the great advantages God has bestowed upon us, in that promise to his Church, *Isa. 49. 23. Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers.* That all offensive and disorderly Walkers may by their Protection and coercive Power, either be reduc'd, or secur'd from harming of us. For there is no pretence of Persecution in this, no more than if a Man should so call a just Conviction for an Action of Battery: *Because he is Self-condemned,* Tit. 3. 11. and is not punished for his Opinion, but for his disorderly acting upon that Opinion. Such was *Diotrephes, who loved to have the prebeminence,* 3 Joh. 9. 10. And if you should pass over the *Deeds which such Men do;* you would be the Betrayers and Murderers of your Flocks. Like the *Hireling, who fleeth, or sitteth still, when he sees the Wolf coming,* Joh. 10. 13.

There is another sort of disorderly Walkers who still keep amongst us, of whom I may say in the Apostles Words, *I have told you before, and now tell you even Weeping,* that by a base compliance and a servile Aw of the most Blameworthy of their Flock, they discover so cowardly a temper, and unsutable to that Christian courage, which should place them above the fear of Men; that they become the *Enemies of the Cross of Christ.* Such Men should not be suffered to herd with us, but ought to be avoided as infectious Creatures. *Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye learnt, and avoid them,* Rom. 16. 17. Such Wretches lye under a complication of diseases, being disobedient through omission of their Duty, Traitors in not Faithfully discharging the trust committed to them; disorderly in not Walking according to the Rule, perjur'd in breaking their Oath of Canonical obedience, and that of Supremacy, injurious to their Brethren and the whole Church, by cherishing the unruly expectations of the People, and are so many ways Unfaithful, that had they any sense of Religion, the consequent words of St. Paul must needs make them ashamed, and confounded. *For they that are such, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly.* 18. Or as it is in another place, *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their Belly, and whose Glory is in their shame, who mind Earthly things,* Phil. 3. 19.

In short do but mark the careful admonition against all *anomia* or disorder in the Church. *Warn them that are unruly,* 1 Thes. 5. 14. *Now we command you Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every Brother that walks disorderly.* 2 Thes. 3. 6. And then observe with what pleasure that *anomia* or good order is mentioned, *For I though absent in the Flesh, yet am with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order,* Col. 2. 5. This word should be written in the Forehead as well as Heart of every Christian, but especially of the Clergy, as *Pilate's Inscription* upon the Cross, in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, that from East to West, and throughout the World, the Glory of our Christian consent might be understood.

You may remember upon the recommending a Hearty and Serious pronunciation of the Divine Service, it was thought very adviseable and reasonable to forbear long and expatiating Prayers before Sermon: Lest either we should be thought our selves to esteem the publick Offices deficient, or give Occasion to others to be of that Opinion. Upon which Occasion was mention'd Mr. Seymours little Treatise of publick set Forms of Prayer. Then likewise were recommended for your People to read, Mr. Allens little Books viz: *A Perswasive to Peace and Unity. A serious and friendly Address to the Nonconformists. The danger of Enthusiasm.* And I shall now add his Book call'd *Catholicism.* As also Mr. Lamb's two Books, viz: *A stop to the Course of Separation: And a fresh suit against Independency.* And this I did, not only for their brevity, but because they are written by Laymen. And such whose expressions are so fair and their integrity and manner of living so well known in the City: That it were impossible to propose more unexceptionable either as to the Style or Authors. I then wished you, as I still do, to Read the Canons to your Congregation once a year, as it is ordered in the Kings Confirmation of them: And that such Acts or Proclamations as have been appointed to be Read upon the thirtieth of January, the nine and twentieth of May, and fifth of November, might be for the future observed.

The urging necessity of Persecution forceth Men into order. But in times of Prosperity, there is great danger of falling asleep: Especially in ours, where the corruption of the Age makes unruliness pass for a virtue. And yet the Censorious humour which it produces, is a strong motive on the other hand, where any sparks of Wisdom or common prudence remain, to observe a very strict and close Order in our own Defence. Take away then the Glory of ordaining Rules, by that which is of infinitely more value, the observation of them. And let not the great and painful care of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, both by Private endeavors, and in Councils, rise up in Judgment against us, for destroying that Discipline by disorder and neglect, which at the peril of their Lives many times, they upheld for the preservation of Christs Body, which is the Church. I pray God strengthen your Heart with a courage suitable for the times we live in, and every way enable you to answer the just expectations of,

Fullham, April 6. 1683.

Your Affectionate Friend and Brother.  
H. London.